

Ann-Tran



Greater Phoenix, Arizona: 10 Reasons to Visit

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This is my fifth visit to the Greater Phoenix, which is about the size of Delaware and spans more than 20 cities and towns, including Scottsdale, Tempe, Mesa, and Glendale. My first trip was a press trip, and since then I have been lucky enough to partner with @visitphoenix on each of the following visits. In fact, this post was created in partnership with [@visitphoenix](#).

National forests ring the Greater Phoenix landscape. I love how golf courses and resorts blend with the preserves and mountain parks punctuating the region and the American Indian communities are woven into area's fabric.

Need more convincing to visit the Greater Phoenix?

May I present ...

My top ten reasons to travel to Greater Phoenix include Arizona's beautiful flowers, murals, seasonally cooler weather, and stunning destinations.

Reason #1 — Need a Change of Climate?

Think the desert is all sizzling sand all year long? It's not. While Arizona is known for its hot and dry weather, it is a great escape for beautifully cool weather from October through April. Actually, the weather differs quite a bit depending on where you are in the state.

I started my visit with @visitphoenix the last week of October and had postcard perfect weather during my stay at the Omni Resort. Check out the entryway.



Omni Scottsdale Resort and Spa at Montelucia

Love the fountain and its tile work as well as the floor's. The classic and simple design offers surprisingly diverse ambiances.

The best time to visit Phoenix? Of course, that depends on your climatic preferences. The most popular season is October through April/May, with highs in the upper 60s, 70s, and low 80s. I love the cool crisp nights when you can sit next to the fire pits and temperate days without much heat. Make sure to use sunscreen and ChapStick; you are still in the desert.

In the summer, the highs average above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Remember, nothing is guaranteed when you visit, keep in mind Mother Nature can alter any season at any time.

Reason #2 — Phoenix Flora

I have fallen in love with flowers in Phoenix. Where else can you find an abundance of 400 (but whose counting?) of cacti, succulents, and other botanic gems of the desert? Kevin Smith, county park ranger, knows all about the plant species of the desert.

If you love bougainvillea, you must tour @visitphoenix. I regret not taking photos with the peach, pink, and other varieties. I guess I was overloaded with the flora the area had to offer. You will find stunning and vibrant colors as you drive to your destination or at your resort.



Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort and Spa

Most of famous Camelback Mountain falls within Phoenix city limits and the saguaro cactus flower is a prominent feature. Did you know, however, that the state tree is actually the Palo Verde tree, not the Saguaro cactus?

Did you know these other cactus facts?

- Cutting down a saguaro cactus is a crime punishable by up to 25 years in prison.
- Homeowners who wish to move a Saguaro must receive permission from the Arizona Department of Agriculture or risk a felony criminal damage charge.

Do you know many types of cactus are in the desert? No cheating ٠٠. The answer follows later.

Hummingbirds (I know, fauna not flora) populate the area. I loved walking around the @sanctuaryaz property and chasing them with my iPhone. Such a magical moment with Mother Nature.

Some fun facts you may not know about hummingbirds:

- They can fly forward, up, down, and in reverse. They can stay in place, too. They are the only known bird to have helicopter-like attributes.
- To invite them to your home, hang an outdoor feeder, typically in red, with plenty of nectar. You can create your own nectar with sugar and water. Garden centers typically stock hummingbird supplies. Also, they like tubular flowers, such as columbine and daylilies, there's more nectar.

Reason #3 — What's Growing at the Desert Botanical Garden?

You won't want to miss the Desert Botanical Garden @dbgphx if you are into horticulture. I absolutely recommend a tour. @dbgphx So much beauty in one place, it is the largest botanical garden in the Southwest featuring 55,000 plants from across the world. Definitely will revisit for a sunset moment with Mother Nature.



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P.S. Hummingbirds are plentiful at the Desert Botanical Garden.

Reason #4 — Spa-spa-hooray!

Phoenix is highlighted with incredible resorts and golf courses.

What a magnificent day at the Aji Spa. Everything was perfection: from the friendly attentive staff to the delicious and healthy poolside lunch. I thoroughly enjoyed the classic full body massage, perfect for relaxation and stress relief. The therapists are exceptional, and the Native American themed surroundings add to the Zen-sensory experience.

The Aji Café offers a health-conscious menu that's rich in flavor. A great selection of scrumptious salads, flatbreads, and sandwiches without having to leave the comfort of your lush Aji Spa robe. Inside joke, 98% of the "dudes" (men) order the chicken sandwich. This hearty sandwich is simple and yet delicious. I don't normally eat chicken, but this is a great choice.

Thank you for hosting me @sheratongrandaz It is always a treat to visit your team.

Another incredible location for lunch and spa-ing is with Premier Luxury Resort @thePhoenician. I spent the day at this property. Part of that time was 80 minutes in the heavenly spa.

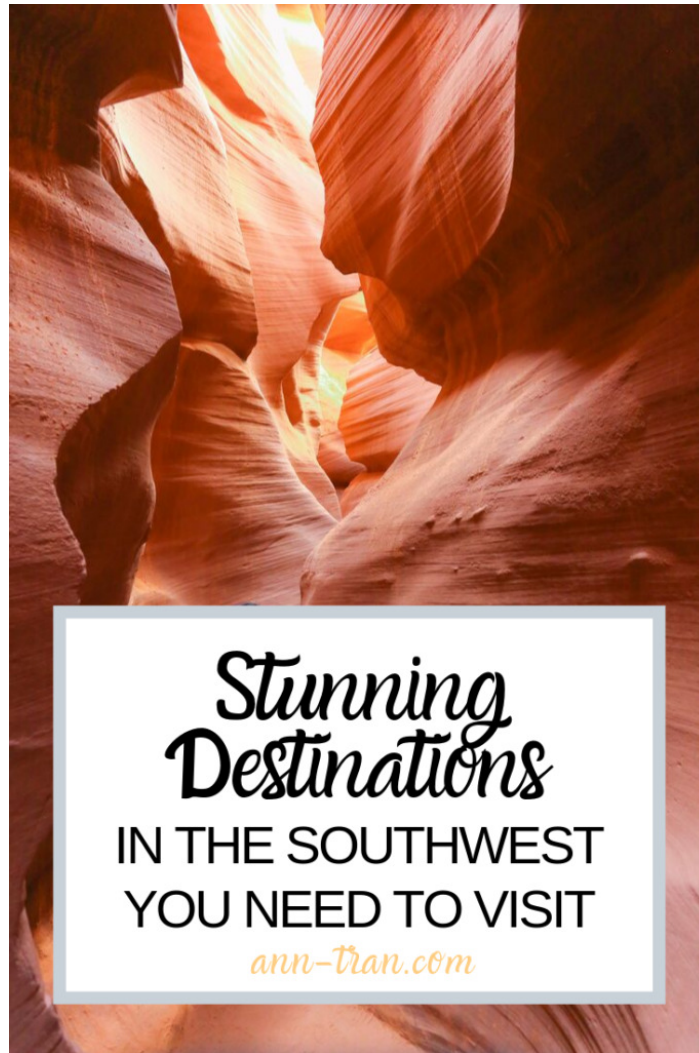
How often do you treat yourself? If you live in the area, I hope you have the opportunity to frequent and treat yourself to "some me time."

The next time I visit, I will head back for my favorite pastrami sandwich EVER at Mowry & Cotton!

#spadayeverydayplease

Reason #5 — Lower Antelope Canyon's dreamscape

If you are on Pinterest, you will find images of Lower Antelope Canyon at every bend. For good reason. Lower Antelope Canyon is part of a Navajo Tribal Park. Etched in red and smoothed by the Ice Age and winds, the slot canyon reminds me of a luge ride.



Visiting Lower Antelope Canyon is only possible with a local guide. Book your tour at least two weeks out and you shouldn't have any problem with availability. Heart-stopping landscapes are at every turn. Best time to visit is at end of February.

You can read more here: [Stunning Destinations in the Southwest You Need to Visit](#). You are going to love the pictures!

Reason #6 — Best Mural Walls in Phoenix (and their EXACT Locations)

If you love murals and art-walks and up for a fun scavenger hunt, you will find incredible public art installations and photo ops for your Instagram page all over the metro area.



Phoenix

THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUND FOR MURALS

ann-tran.com

Chandler Fashion Center

I have tracked down all Kelsey Montague's pieces here for you: [Phoenix – The happy hunting ground for murals @visitphoenix](#) You can thank me later. I toured by pedicab and came across some amazing local talents in downtown Phoenix. If you want to do the same, make sure to book with Billy Oxford, AZPC.

Reason #7 — Lucky 7, Me Time, and Where to Stay

As mentioned, this was my fifth visit with @visitphoenix. It may be one of my favorite visits. Why? I tend to pack my tours to maximize content collection, sometimes cutting short the moments to “just be.”

Lucky me, I stayed at these two alluring resorts. They each offered their own unique beauty. Depending on your taste, take a look at my Instagram page and their sites to decide. Or better yet, try both locations and let me know your experience.



Camelback view from @sanctuaryaz_

This is my Camelback view from Sanctuary Camelback property. @sanctuaryaz The iconic Camelback Mountain is a popular hiking destination. Its jagged profile cuts across the desert landscape of Paradise Valley. During the day, the sunlight intensifies those rich red rocks, and as the sun sets, the lights of the city illuminate the dark sky around it, creating an ethereal glow.



Pool vista from Sanctuary Camelback Resort

I love the detailed design of the resort's architecture and landscaping. What do you think of this pool vista?

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Montelucia is Spanish for “mountain of light. It certainly describes the sprawling Omni Resort. Since a picture is worth 1,000 words, I figure video is worth at least a million. You’ll love this drone footage.

FYI, the Omni is less expensive than the Sanctuary. I found the Omni to have more of a European feel, which, you know, I love.

Reason #8 — The Old West Frontier is Alive and Well

This D.C. girl spent a fun day recalling a time when cowboys and Indians still roamed the desert. There are so many photo opportunities visiting up the popular historic Apache Trail in @VisitMesa. Did you know the fifth largest forest in the United States includes the mysterious Superstition Mountains and spreads into the foothills of the Tonto National Forest?



Mammoth Steakhouse and Saloon at the Goldfield Ghost Town in Apache Junction, Arizona, off Route 88.

In case you are wondering about the Elvis Memorial Chapel at Superstition Mountain. It was relocated piece by piece from the old Apacheland movie ranch and still is a location for weddings.

Reason #9 — Change is Good

I confess, I have fallen in love with Arizona over the years.

"Travel changes you. As you move through this life and this world you change things slightly, you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life – and travel – leaves marks on you. Most of the time, those marks – on your body or on your heart – are beautiful. Often, though, they hurt." ~ Anthony Bourdain

Very true! I never thought I would revisit the Southwest every year when I first visited. Thank you Anthony.

Reason #10 — For the Friendships and Inner Growth

My very first trip when I first started social media was with Doug from @visitphoenix. I now visit every year and have learned so much from Doug and his team.

And still learning each year and sharing my Southwest journey with you.

Oh, before I forget. How many types of cactus are there in the desert? Answer: There are 626 varieties.

This trip was sponsored, what I've shared with you are all from my wonderful experiences. If any experience were not pleasant, I vote with my feet. Meaning, I won't go back nor write about it. My entire trip was 100% amazing.